What the War Taught an English Physician

IF a man starting out to write a book should be too keenly conscious of all the books that had been written before on his or any other given topic, probably fewer books would be written. The author of *A Physician in France*, an Englishman, Major-Gen. Sir Wilmot Herringham, has not been burdened with any such consciousness which is probably the reason why he has written so readable a book.

He begins at the beginning, discusses the origins of the war and varying aims and contracting ideals, and proceeds in a leisurely manner to comment not only upon his particular part in the war, as consulting physician to the British army, but upon everything that happened during his long service in France to come under his observation. And being a man of quick mentality and obvious scholarship little escaped his observation, so that in his book he not only writes of wounds and fevers and shell shock and gas and various hospital experiences, but of religion and education and literature and contrasting French and English ways.

The author was past middle life and connected with a well known London hospital when the war began. He served as consulting physician from the first battle of Ypres to the signing of the armistice. He says that although he might be considered, after thirty-five years' experience, to be well equipped for his profession he learned more medicine during the five years of the war than in any previous five years of his life.

But he learned more than medicine. He learned, for example, that a modern attack is not as it has generally been painted. There is nothing swift or rushing or dramatic about it. On the contrary, it is a slow walk, about the pace of a funeral march, and looks, as he quotes somebone saying, "like a geologizing party." He repeats the story of the young officer who dribbled a football in front of his men, and says it recalls Napier's story of Cloudesley Shovel getting off his horse to tighten his girths in front of a regiment which was being subjected to a very severe fire.

"The Duke cursed him for a young fool, but he excused himself by saying, 'I thought, sir, the men were getting a little unsteady.'"

The author says Barbusse in *Under Fire* gives the only accurate description he has read of a modern attack. He praises the Frenchman's book and recommends to readers an Englishman's book, which we also liked, *A Temporary Gentleman in France*, about a little auctioneer from Brixton, who in his letter home, after being wounded, humorously described himself in the language of an auction room catalogue, "slightly damaged," &c.

Although this Englishman found much to criticise in France, especially in matters of sanitation, he by no means permits the English to escape. He especially advises the encouragement of dentistry among them, seeming to suggest that the morning tub and shave might be neglected once in a while in favor of the toothbrush. He criticises the abbreviated skirts of the English nurses, not from any old-fashioned prudery, but because the English leg suffers by contrast with the French. "The English leg is, I am sorry to say, highly inelegant, whereas the French are very neat, and when you get a really good view of the whole leg to just below the knee the contrast is distressing."

Although there is much in the book that will doubtless be especially interesting to the medical profession, there is even more for the general reader who may not yet have gone on strike against reading any more war books.

A PHYSICIAN IN FRANCE. By Major-Gen. Sir Wilmot Herringham. Longmans, Green & Co.

Uncas a la Wyeth

MR. N. C. WYETH has illustrated a new edition of *The Last of the Mohicans*. The result we think one of the least successful of the be-Wyethed classics. With a single exception, the handclasp of Hawkeye and Chingachgook over Uncas's grave, the paintings that most appeal to us are not very specifically *illustrations* at all; they are, rather, appropriate pictures. Mr. Wyeth is fond of firelit interiors, and we like his Indians in the council tent, and his conception of the unmasking of Hawkeye before Duncan. But candor compels us to say that we greatly dislike the fruit cakey richness of color in several of his other contributions.

All Indians look alike to Mr. Wyeth, though undoubtedly he is accurate in distinguishing among tribal insignia and appurtenances. But facially, characteristically, Uncas and Magua are as two clothespins. Even if this were good anthropology—and memories of a boyhood passed near the Onondaga reservation convince us that it is not—it is bad Fenimore Cooper. Only Europeans imagine nowadays that Cooper's Indians and the real article had much in common. And yet Cooper's are immortal. Then why not graphically reflect their individualities? Hawkeye is better, but this Hawkeye is any Deerslayer, not a particular one. Duncan and the girls are lay figures, though that is no serious matter. David is a scarecrow out-scared. The flight of Duncan and Alice through the forest in the moonlight simply shows that Mr. Wyeth ought to give study to moonlit trees.

We have not forgiven this capable Pyle disciple for his failure to individualize the pirates in *Treasure Island*. We acknowledge that Cooper's redskins are more of a problem than Stevenson's mutineers. Even then we insist that something might have been accomplished, especially with the so noble Uncas and the so villainous Magua.

However, here is a new edition of a story that is part of the heritage of youth, and plenty of young people are sure to like it as a gift.

THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS. By James Fenimore Cooper. Illustrated by N. C. Wyeth. Charles Scribner's Sons.

A Plea for 'Prentices.

WHEN we think of an apprentice we think of a half clad, half starved boy bound to a cruel master for a number of years, cuffed and perhaps beaten, and earning only his board and keep and not much of that. Rufus Steele has a different conception altogether and in his little book, *Aces for Industry*, he asks for a return to the apprentice in industry. He thinks we have been so busy perfecting the machine that we have been neglecting the human element.

He relates the experiment of a man who took ten boys, apprentices, in a factory, to train them in industrial intelligence and to teach them the business from the ground up. The experiment was successful, resulting in greater intelligence, efficiency, initiative and interest in work, and, it follows, greater and higher grade production.

Incidentally, the boys had the time of their lives and did not find mathematics, physics, technology and the rest so bad when put to immediate and practical application. The idea is to develop not only an esprit de corps among industrial workers, but the spirit of the individual, fired, like the "aces" among the aviators, to do brave and daring stunts on their own account. A man gets more pleasure out of driving an automobile, and drives better if he understands the mechanism. The same thing probably follows with a man behind a machine in a factory.

Mr. Steele does not think that all the brains should be permitted to go into the machines and to this end advocates the return of the apprentice and thorough industrial training. He presents his idea attractively.

ACES FOR INDUSTRY. By Rufus Steele. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Snow-Blindness and Other Adventures

ENOS A. MILLS has a passion for the open in exactly the same way that some men have a passion for draw poker or the races. In his book, *The Adventures of a Nature Guide*, he takes his readers on rambles through the forests and the mountains of the West, sometimes above timberline into the trackless white wastes of the continent's roof tree. No one who finds pleasure outdoors, or interest in nature, can fail to follow him eagerly through his 271 pages.

On one occasion Mr. Mills lost his snow glasses just before leaving the timber in the high altitudes of the Rockies. Not realizing his danger, he pushed on into the snow fields under the brilliant sun. Not many hours later his eyes began to pain and the snow-blindness settled upon him. Experienced as he was, Mr. Mills says that, at first he did not realize his danger. The task of finding his way back to the timber, picking up a trail and reaching the cabin of some woodsman confronted, but he faced it bravely.

If courage had been his only resource he could never have passed through the adventure alive. His woodcraft, together with good fortune, saved him. Once a mountain snow slide loosened itself from above and he heard the thunder of the approaching avalanche which he could not see. He stood perfectly still and it missed him by a dozen paces. He later lost one of his snow shoes and groped in the darkness for hours before he found it. On another occasion thin ice gave way beneath his weight and his feet and legs would have frozen had he not stumbled upon a deserted mountain cabin and built a fire in the stove he found inside. And all the time his eyes were giving him exquisite pain! He could not have lasted much longer; the reader is relieved when at length he finds shelter and friends.

Mr. Mills gives us intimate pictures of wild life. He spends days and weeks in silently observing the birds and beasts which, after all, is said of "instinct," have so very much about them that seems "human."

THE ADVENTURES OF A NATURE GUIDE. By Enos A. Mills. Doubleday, Page & Co.